

## GOLGOTHA.

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The Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, northwest of the Dome of the Rock on the site of the Solomonic Temple, is supposed to be built over the tomb in which the body of Christ was laid by Joseph of Arimathea (OC 34, 184).<sup>1</sup> This locality would seem to have been within the walls of Jerusalem at the time of the Crucifixion (RB 541<sup>b</sup>; DB 2, 589<sup>b</sup>. 595<sup>a</sup>; contrast RE<sup>3</sup> 7, 49, 28; EB 2430, 32, ii). But the place of execution was outside the city, in a conspicuous spot, beside a frequented road leading to one of the gates, near a garden with a new rock-cut tomb (Mark 15, 29. 40; Heb. 13, 12; Matt. 27, 39; 28, 11; Luke 23, 49; John 19, 20. 41).

The original Church of the Holy Sepulcher was built by Constantine the Great (323-337) who is said to have commissioned Bishop Macarius of Jerusalem to search for the tomb and the cross. The bishop reported that the Holy Sepulcher was under the temple of Aphrodite which, according to later writers, had been built by Hadrian in 135. Macarius may have been influenced by the desire to obtain two magnificent Christian churches instead of the pagan sanctuary of Venus (RB 541<sup>a</sup>). Similarly the traditional scene of the Nativity is alleged to have been desecrated during the reign of

<sup>1</sup> AJSL = *American Journal of Semitic Languages*.—AS = Anglo-Saxon.—AV = Authorized Version.—BL = Haupt, *Biblische Liebeslieder* (1907).—DB = Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*.—EB = Cheyne-Black, *Encyclopædia Biblica*.—EB<sup>11</sup> = *Encyclopædia Britannica*, eleventh edition.—JAOS = *Journal of the American Oriental Society*.—JBL = *Journal of Biblical Literature*.—JHUC = *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*.—JSOR = *Journal of the Society of Oriental Research*.—OC = *The Open Court*.—OHG = Old High German.—Pur. = Haupt, *Purim* (1906).—RB = Riehm-Bæthgen, *Handwörterbuch des Biblischen Altertums*.—RE<sup>3</sup> = Hauck, *Realencyclopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, third edition.—ZAT = *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*.

Hadrian (117–138) by a temple of Adonis; but the inn at Bethlehem, where Jesus is said to have been born, must have been near the road from Jerusalem to Hebron, northwest of Bethlehem, not in the southeastern corner of the village (*Monist*, 30, 158, n. 35).

A rock-cut tomb under the Hadrianic temple of Venus was assumed to be the tomb of Christ. In another cavity of the rock, 280 feet to the east, three crosses were found, which were supposed to be the crosses on which Christ and the two thieves were crucified. One of the crosses had miraculous power: a crippled old woman stretched on it was cured. Constantine built a magnificent church over the place where the crosses had been discovered, and a smaller church over the reputed Holy Sepulcher. A hill between the two churches was supposed to be Mount Golgotha. The Basilica of the Holy Cross is no longer extant. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher was destroyed repeatedly; the present building was erected in 1810.

The discovery of the Holy Sepulcher and the two churches built by Constantine are described by the Father of Church History, Eusebius of Cæsarea (c. 260–c. 340) in his *Life of Constantine*; but this biography is untrustworthy. Later writers attribute the discovery of the Holy Cross to Constantine's mother, St. Helena, who was, according to St. Ambrose, an inn-keeper (*stabularia*; RE<sup>3</sup> 7, 616, 26). Constantine the Great was the illegitimate son (EB<sup>11</sup> 16, 988<sup>a</sup>; RE<sup>3</sup> 10, 759, 21) of St. Helena and Constantius Chlorus, the co-regent of Diocletian. In 289 Constantius married Maximian's step-daughter. In his *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius also relates that the emperor saw in the sky at noonday a flaming cross with the legend Ἐν τούτῳ νίκα (*In hoc signo vinces*) whereas other contemporaries state that this sign was seen in a dream. Under Constantine the cross, which is an ancient pre-Christian symbol, became the emblem of Christianity.

St. Helena's discovery of the Holy Cross, which is first mentioned by Rufinus who died in 410, is commemorated on May 3. Since 1895 the name of this festival in the *Diario Romano* is no longer Invention (*Invenzione*) of the Holy Cross, but Rediscovery (*Ritrovamento*) of the Holy Cross, because according to an older legend the true cross was found under Tiberius who died in 37 A.D.

(EB<sup>11</sup> 7, 506<sup>b</sup>). St. Helena is said to have found, not only the true cross, but also the superscription over the head of Jesus on the cross as well as the nails with which He had been crucified. Constantine is supposed to have sent a piece of the Holy Cross to Rome where it is still exhibited in the church of S. Croce in Gerusalemme on May 3 as well as on Good Friday and the third Sunday in Lent. In a vault of this church the superscription on the cross is said to have been accidentally found in 1492. If Constantine had sent it to Rome, it must have been lost sight of for more than a thousand years. Two of the nails, with which Christ was affixed to the cross, are reputed to be preserved at Milan and Trier, respectively (EB<sup>11</sup> 7, 507<sup>a</sup>). St. Helena is supposed to have presented to Trier also the seamless robe (*tunica inconsutilis*) of Christ. It was exhibited in 1891 to two million pilgrims. There are twenty holy seamless coats, *e.g.*, at Argenteuil near Paris, St. John Lateran at Rome, etc. (RE<sup>3</sup> 17, 60, 45).

The authenticity of the site of the Holy Sepulcher has been questioned from early times. The Father of Biblical Geography, Edward Robinson, stated (1841) after his researches in Palestine that the traditional site could not be the true one. A German bookseller, Jonas Korte, of Altona, who visited Jerusalem in 1738, suggested that Golgotha was west of Jerusalem, near the Mâmilla Pool (JAOS 39, 143, b) which is  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile northwest of the Jaffa Gate. In 1842 Otto Thenius, of Dresden, came to the conclusion that the place of crucifixion was above Jeremiah's Grotto outside the Damascus Gate in the north, and this view of the German Biblical critic has been endorsed by Canon Tristram, Dr. Selah Merrill, General Gordon, Col. Conder, etc. (EB<sup>11</sup> 24, 657<sup>b</sup>). Three years before his death at Khartum in 1885 Gen. Gordon spent a year in Palestine, studying Biblical history and the antiquities of Jerusalem. An ancient rock-cut tomb, about 200 yards west of Jeremiah's Grotto is sometimes called Gordon's Tomb of Christ. This tomb, however, seems to be later than the time of the Crucifixion. In 1847 the author of *The History of Architecture*, James Ferguson, made the startling proposal that the Dome of the Rock on the site of the Solomonic Temple was the church built by Constantine over the

Holy Sepulcher. But the Dome of the Rock, also misnamed the Mosque of Omar, was erected by Abd-al-Malik in 691, and the mosaic map discovered at Medeba in 1896 shows the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in its present location. This map formed the floor of a basilica built in the fifth or sixth centuries.

I believe that the Crucifixion took place at the Topheth in the Valley of Hinnom, south of the Harsith Gate in the southeastern corner of Jerusalem. This gate was also called Ashpoth Gate which is generally mistranslated Dung Gate; but Ashpoth is the Hebrew form of Topheth, *i.e.*, Aram. *těfâth* with the vowels of *bósheth*, shame, because the Jews did not pronounce the objectionable word Topheth, but substituted for it *bósheth*, shame (JBL 37, 233). In the same way the names of Astarte and Melech, the god of the Ammonites, appear in the Hebrew Bible as Ashtoreth and Molech, respectively. Also the name of the valley (now filled up with rubbish) between the eastern and western hills, which led to the Topheth in the Valley of Hinnom, was Topheth valley. The name *Tyropæon* (EB<sup>11</sup> 15, 332) valley, given by Josephus, is due to a misunderstanding of the original Hebrew name *gê-hash-shěphôth*, in which *shěphôth* (*cf.* Neh. 3, 13) is the Hebrew form of the Aramaic *těphâth*, Topheth, but it was misinterpreted as *cheeses* (*Tyropæon*, τῶν τυροποιῶν means *of the cheesemakers*) on the basis of 2 Sam. 17, 29 (EB 3091. 2423, n. 4). According to Wetzstein (ZAT 3, 276) *shěphôth* in 2 Sam. 17, 29 denotes *thick cream* of cow's milk (not ewe's milk) in small wooden cylinders (see cut in RB 1742). In Damascus, cream is called *shifâ-'l ḥalibi*, top of the milk (*cf.* Austrian *Obers*). The word in 2 Sam. 17, 29 should be spelled with *Sîn* (not *Shîn*).

Topheth (more correctly *Těphâth*, Heb. *Shěphôth* or *Ashpôth*) means *fire-place*, cremator, incinerator. Refuse and rubbish were deposited there, especially potsherds. Harsith (*i.e.*, potsherd-dump) corresponds to the Roman *Monte Testaccio* (Lat. *Mons Testaceus*) on the left bank of the Tiber in the southwestern corner of Rome. This accumulation of potsherds is about 2,500 feet in circumference, and about 115 feet high. The *Mons Testaceus* of Jerusalem was also called Potter's Field, and afterwards Field of Blood, because

it was used as a place of public execution in the Roman period; cf. the blood-ban of the Fehmic courts on the Red Earth of Westphalia (EB<sup>11</sup> 10, 237<sup>a</sup>). The two explanations of the name Field of Blood (Aram. *ḥāqāl-dēmā*; AV *Aceldama*; RV *Akeldama*) given in Matt. 27, 8 and Acts 1, 19 represent later legends. Matt. 27, 10 is based on a misinterpretation of a line of the Maccabean poem in Zech. 11, 13 (misattributed to Jeremiah) where we must read *el-hay-yaçár*, into the treasury (Peshita: *bêth-gázzâ*) instead of *el-hay-yôçér*, to the potter. Heb. *yaçár*, treasury, is a byform of *ôçár*, from *waçar* = *naçar*, just as we have in Aramaic: *yěgár* and *ôgár*, heap of stones. The traditional site of Aceldama (see cut RB 232) is on a level overhanging the Valley of Hinnom on the northeastern slope of the Hill of Evil Counsel, where Caiaphas is said to have taken counsel with the chief priests and elders of the people against Jesus to put Him to death (Matt. 26, 3; 27, 1; John 11, 49). The soil of this place is supposed to quickly consume dead bodies; 270 shiploads are said to have been taken to form the *Cimetero dei Tedeschi*, south of St. Peter's, in Rome, and 53 to the Campo Santo in Pisa (DB 1, 59<sup>b</sup>).

The Targum uses *qilqiltâ* (=Syr. *qîqáltâ*) for Heb. *ashpôth* (1 Sam. 2, 18; Ps. 113, 7) or *ḥarsîth* (Jer. 19, 2). This is the original form of the name Golgotha which represents a simplified pronunciation of *golgóltâ*, just as we say *fugleman* for *flugleman* = German *Flügelmann*. In Syriac we find *Gâgóltâ* instead of *Golgotha*. This name is interpreted as The Skull (Aram. *gulgúltâ*, Heb. *gulgólth*, Arab. *gálgalatun*, now pronounced *jáljalah*). According to a pre-Christian legend, which we find e.g., in the Ethiopic Synaxaria, Noah sent his son Shem (accompanied by Melchizedek; cf. JOSR 2, 79) to bury the body of Adam in the center of the earth which is Calvary (Ethiop. *Qarânyô*; Dillm. *Chrest.* 16). Lat. *calvaria* means *skull*, brain-pan. During the Crucifixion the blood of Christ trickled down on the body of Adam and restored him to life (DB 2, 226<sup>a</sup>). The skull and the bones at the base of a crucifix represent the skull and the bones of Adam (RE<sup>3</sup> 7, 52, 25). St. Augustine says, The physician was raised over the patient (RB 540, \* \*). Some think that the name Golgotha was derived from the

round and skull-like contours of the place. The eminence above the Grotto of Jeremiah, not far from the Damascus Gate in the north, has a strong resemblance to a skull. Others believed that the site of the Crucifixion received this name because it was full of skulls. The Jews did not crucify persons alive, and even when they gibbeted criminals after their execution, they interred them by nightfall, so that there could be no accumulation of skulls and dead bones; but the Romans allowed the bodies of crucified malefactors to decay on the cross. Horace (*Ep.* 1, 16, 48) says: *Non pasces in cruce corvos*; cf. Byron's *ravenstone* = German *Rabenstein* (*stein* = rock, eminence, hill). Golgotha may be the prototype of our *gallows* (AS *gealga*, OHG *galgo*, Goth. *galga*) which denotes originally the cross on which Christ was crucified, so that Mount Golgotha corresponds in some respects to our Gallows Hill (German *Galgenberg*). The cross was the Roman gallows. *Gallows* is generally identified with Lithuanian *žalga*, pole, Lat. *pertica*. The gallows at Montfaucon near Paris had pits beneath, into which the bodies fell after disarticulation by exposure to the weather (EB<sup>11</sup> 11, 422). After the massacre of St. Bartholomew on August 24, 1572, the beheaded body of Coligny was gibbeted for several days at Montfaucon (RE<sup>3</sup> 4, 227, 1). The bodies suspended on gibbets were often smeared with pitch to prevent too rapid decomposition.

After the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Titus is said to have crucified so many Jews that there was neither timber for the crosses nor place to set them up (DB 1, 528<sup>b</sup>). The upright stake of the cross was firmly planted in the ground and remained there as a permanent fixture (RE<sup>3</sup> 11, 91, 38). The condemned criminal carried only the crosspiece or transverse beam (Lat. *patibulum*) to the place of execution (RE<sup>3</sup> 11, 91, 31; DB 1, 528<sup>b</sup>). The upright stake was not more than nine feet high; the feet of the crucified malefactor were but slightly elevated above the ground (*Pur.* 6, 24; BL 102, \*). The Romans may have called the accumulation of potsherds and other rubbish, which was used as a place of execution, *Mons Testaceus*, and this may afterwards have been interpreted to mean Mound of Skulls, because Lat. *testa* means both *potsherd* and *skull*, so that *Golgotha* (= Aram. *gulgúltâ*) instead of the original *qilqîtâ* would represent a popular etymology which was

favored by the fact that the Semitic *q* is often pronounced as *g*; even *k* may become *g* under the influence of an *l*, *r*, or *n*: Assy. *Tukulti-pal-esharra* appear in the Old Testament as *Tiglath-pileser* (JBL 36, 141, n. 3) and *Sharru-kênu* as *Sargon*; the Hebrew name of the Sea of Galilee, *Chinnereth* (Josh. 13, 27; OC 23, 199) became *Gennereth*, and with transposition and *s* instead of *th*: *Genneser* or, with *a* instead of *e* owing to the final *r*, *Gennesar* (1 Mac. 11, 67).

The correct translation of the Hebrew name *Sha'r Ashpoth* is not *Dung Gate*, but *Topheth Gate* (JBL 37, 233). The other name of this gate, *Harsith Gate* (Jer. 19, 2) is mistranslated in AV: *East Gate*, and in the margin: *Sun Gate*; RV retains the Hebrew word: the gate *Harsith*, but adds in the margin: *the gate of potsherds*. In certain parts of England *shard* is used not only for *potsherd*, but also for *dung*, ordure. St. Jerome describes *Topheth* as a pleasant spot in the Valley of *Hinnom* with trees and gardens watered from *Siloam*, *i.e.*, in the gardens below *Siloam* at the junction of the Valleys of *Hinnom* and *Kidron* (DB 2, 386<sup>a</sup>. 387<sup>a</sup>; 4, 798<sup>b</sup>, below).

Both *Hinnom* and *Kidron* mean *resting-place*: Heb. *hinnôm* is the infinitive of the reflexive-passive stem of *nûm*, to slumber, and *qidrôn* is a transposition of *riqdôn*, from *raqad* which means in Arabic *to sleep*. Arab. *ráqdah* denotes the time between death and resurrection; *márqad* signifies *resting-place*, grave. The Valley of *Hinnom* and the *Kidron* ravine seem to have been ancient burial-grounds. The Greek Bible has for the Valley of *Hinnom* the term *polyándrion*, a burial place for many, and according to Jer. 31, 40, not only dead bodies were deposited there, but also offal (JBL 38, 45). Heb. *gê-hinnôm*, the valley of *Hinnom*, is the prototype of *Gehenna*. According to 2 Kings 23, 6 the graves of the children of the people (*i.e.*, the common people) were in the *Kidron* valley. In the pre-Exilic period heathen images and altars were repeatedly cast into the *Kidron* valley and burned there. The flaming pyres with the dead bodies of the apostate Jews, on which the Maccabees feasted their eyes when they went to worship *Ἰησοῦς* in the Temple, were in the *Kidron* valley between the Temple and *Mount Olivet*. There were plenty of corpses to feed the worms and the fires, so *their worm died not, and their fire was not quenched* (JHUC, No.

306, p. 13). The last two verses of the Book of Isaiah represent an appendix which was added about 153 B.C. (AJSL 19, 135). The Kidron valley is also called the Valley of Jehoshaphat (JAOS 34, 412). The Jews as well as the Christians and the Mohammedans of Palestine believe that the Last Judgment will be held in the Kidron valley, and it is the dearest wish of every Jew to find a grave there. The whole of the left bank of the Kidron opposite the Temple area is covered with the white tomb-stones of the Jews (EB 2662). Some Jewish teachers believe that the bodies of the righteous will roll back under the ground to Palestine to obtain a share in the resurrection preceding the Messiah's reign on earth (DB 2, 562<sup>a</sup>). The two valleys have often been confounded: *e.g.*, the great Moslem traveler Ibn Batûtah (1204-1378) says that the valley of Gehenna was east of Jerusalem.

Golgotha is identical with Topheth in the Valley of Hinnom, south of the Harsith Gate in the southeastern corner of Jerusalem. It was a rubbish-heap like the Roman *Monte Testaccio*, formed of potsherds and other refuse.<sup>2</sup> It was therefore known also as Potter's Field, and afterwards it was called Field of Blood, because it was used by the Romans as a place of public execution. The original form of Golgotha was *qilqiltâ*, refuse. The form Golgotha, which is also the prototype of our *gallows*, represents a popular etymology. The Romans may have called the Harsith *Mons Testaceus*, and since *testa* means both *potsherd* and *skull*, this name may have been interpreted as Place of Skulls. After the Harsith had been used by the Romans as the place of crucifixion for a number of years, skulls may have been more in evidence there than potsherds. Jeremy Taylor, whose *Life of Christ* was published in 1649, calls the scene of the greatest event in Jerusalem's history *a hill of death and dead bones, impure and polluted* (EB 1753). The Mohammedans sometimes give the Church of the Holy Sepulcher the nickname *Kanîsat-al-Qumâmah*, Church of Rubbish (RB 540<sup>a</sup>) instead of *Kanîsat-al-Qiyâmah*, Church of the Resurrection.

<sup>2</sup> In Corfu the people at a given signal on Easter Eve throw vast quantities of crockery from their windows and roofs into the streets. This is interpreted as an imaginary stoning of Judas Iscariot. Descendants of the traitor were supposed to be among the Jews of Corfu (EB<sup>11</sup>15, 536<sup>a</sup>).